New Books.

The Polychromatic Ornament of Italy. By Edward Adams, Architect. Nickisson, 1847. Part I.

The design of the work of which this is a portion, is to give a connected illustrated history of decorative art in Italy, from the Roman period down to the middle of the sixteenth century. A few weeks ago we printed an extract from the present part, which relates to the first half of that century, and have now only to speak of the illustrations it contains, and offer our encouragement to the author to proceed with the undertaking. The increasing taste for polychromatic ornaments, much to be desired and cultivated, renders it important that good examples should be spread abroad. In the Raffaellesque style of decoration are to be found many beautiful and harmonious combinations of form and colour, and the cheerfulness and gaiety which can by means of it be obtained in our rooms (and, acting on the spirits, this is no unimportant matter, mark you!) render it well adapted for interior decoration.

The first plate shews a development of a coned ceiling in a room in the Farnese Gardens at Rome. Plate 2, a perspective view on the first floor of the Loggiato of the cortile of the Vatican, where ornament is more sparingly employed, and more subservient to the architecture than in some other examples. Plates 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, shew the decorations of this gallery at large, and 10 and 11 give decorations from the second floor Loggia. The examples in this book are well drawn, and beautifully printed in colours. It will be found useful by a large class of our readers, and we cordially recommend it to them.

Correspondence.

DESTRUCTION OF CITY CHURCHES.

Mr. Editor,—I observe in your columns of to-day, a short paragraph referring to the possible removal of St. Benet's Church, Gracechurch-street. In your love for the antique, you lose sight of the practical use of a church.

Now, as a churchman, I always feel that the dissenter has a case against me with the city churches: their number, compared with the absolute need of the present day; the miserably thin attendance; the want of cordial feeling between minister and people; and, the almost necessary consequence, the want of well-organized parochial institutions.

I do not imagine there can be much difference of opinion as to the cause of these evils. First, the non-residence of a large portion of the householders; secondly, the diminutive size of the parishes. To the first point, it might be argued the fashion of the present day *may* pass away, and the citizens of London *may* return to the practice of their forefathers;—I do not think, however, we live in a day to defer improvements because of such remote contingencies. To the second point, there can be no answer,—the parishes are as they were when every house was peopled.

Now, much as I admire the works of Wren and his contemporaries, still I cannot follow you in the mawkish sentiment of declaiming against their removal, without considering the arguments for and against, and whether a present and ultimate good could not be carried out by a judicious picking out of some 8 or 10 of the city churches. I have always been pleased with the vigilance of the present bishop of London, in checking the ruthless hand of the utilitarians and calculators of our day, who would knock down a church with as little compunction as they would a *warehouse*. I believe I am correct in saying the bishop has always dictated his own terms in giving his consent to remove any ecclesiastical edifice or place of sepulture, and that he has administered the funds arising from any removal for the benefit of some destitute district of the metropolis.

If I wanted to add proof upon proof of the present evil state of things, I would refer you to the last census, and divide each parish in the city of London and suburbs by its church or churches, and the result would bear out my argument, that a great public good would arise from the amalgamation of several of the smaller city parishes into one. Take one illustration as conclusive: St. Margaret, Lothbury, at the last census, was reputed to have a population of 189; St. Mary Pattens, 167; St. Sepulchre, 13,325; St. Giles, Cripplegate, 13,255; each of these parishes has *one church*. I commend this subject to you, and shall feel glad if you consider these lines worthy of admission into your journal, which I feel assured would be open to receive correspondence, although it may differ in opinion with you.—I am, Sir, &c.,

Bishopsgate-street, March 27, 1847. An Architect.

*** Our correspondent has not made out a sufficient case. His argument carried out would justify the destruction of all the unused naves of all our magnificent cathedrals. We sincerely hope that the public voice will protest loudly against the removal of any of the City churches.

STATE OF LONDON—GRAVE-YARDS AND CESSPOOLS.

Sir,—On passing down Snow-hill yesterday, about one o'clock, I witnessed a grave-yard scene: a church, with its grave-yard, standing at the corner of a street leading to a market. The grave-yard workpeople had opened a vault, I suppose, for the admission of a corpse; there appeared a vast quantity of water in the sanctum, which they were busily engaged in emptying by pails into the street, and it was flowing down the gutter in a wide stream until it arrived at the sewer grating, a good many feet from the spot. Should such a thing as this be done in the broad day light? or could it have been done in the night? Will such water as this be beneficial to health or injurious?

As I am upon nuisances, allow me to take one or two more. I will take the cesspools first. A house situated in Basing-lane has a large cesspool in the basement, the stench from which upon the ground floor is suffocating; yet respectable people rent this floor for business, and are in it many hours in the day, and for the sake of a few pounds will not lay out money to alter this annoyance and breeder of fevers.

Another existing evil is one I think you would scarcely believe to exist in London: that in eight houses, which I surveyed some time since, occupied by poor Irish, the women and children earning from fivepence to sixpence a day (the houses let out in floors, none of which possessed a sufficiency of furniture, and one in particular had not one vestige of furniture in the apartment); the outbuildings for natural convenience were gone, and all filth was to be seen, and common decency done away with; in short, the houses were unfit for habitation.

Allow me to ask a few questions, which others can think of and answer.

What are the duties of a district surveyor, the parish, and police authorities?

Is Ireland in London, or is it not?

If Ireland wants soup kitchens, does not London?

If the poor of Ireland, existing in Ireland, require cultivating and bettering their condition, do not the poor of Ireland, existing in London, require the same?

From your old Subscriber,
City Road, March 30. Anon.

THE KENSINGTON RESERVOIR, LIVERPOOL.

Sir,—Permit me to set you right as to the nature of the leak referred to in The Builder of Saturday last. The Kensington reservoir, in connection with the Green-lane Waterworks, had been filled for the first time on the morning of Thursday, and up to one o'clock on Friday no sign of leakage appeared. The cause of the leak was a slight subsidence of the puddle under the overflow-pipe which passes through the embankment about 6 feet below the top water-line, which pipe rests on masonry in the overflow tank. The water found its way between the pipe and puddle, the pipe having remained rigid whilst the puddle sank slightly; the depth of the cutting to the bed of the drain-pipe at that point being 26 feet below the top of the embankment, by much the deepest cutting under any portion of the works. The whole cost of making every thing good did not amount to 5*l.*, and the time occupied in stopping the leak was under half a day, and that too with four feet of water over it in the reservoir. If it had been of the character described by your informant, i. e. issuing from fifty places, this could not have been effected. The above account is the truth, and you will oblige by giving it a place in your next.

Fenwick Chambers, Liverpool, 6th April, 1847. I am, Sir, &c., T. Duncan.

LEICESTER SQUARE AND TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

Sir,—My attention has been particularly drawn in your journal of the 27th, to the fitness of your remarks, and the very judicious suggestions offered as to the required alterations in Leicester-square. The throwing open the inclosures, and placing architectural objects of taste within various squares in London, would, I think, be generally an improvement.

As I hope the public will be attracted to an appropriation of your very valuable suggestions, and, as an amateur and subscriber to your valuable journal, will you permit me to ask whether, if the fountain square, or place, in Trafalgar-square had a flight of steps, or what the French style a *perron*, opposite the too much abused National Gallery, whether it would not improve the confined appearance which the dead wall now possesses, and give height and grandeur to the portico and façade of the Gallery? The *perron* might be made an object not only of taste, by offering pedestals for figures or statues of public characters, but it would also be useful and convenient.—I am, Sir, &c., A Mason.

Rochester, March 30, 1847.

Miscellanea.

Matter of Opinion.—Where London becomes more interesting is Charing-cross. Look to Northumberland-house, and turning your back upon Trafalgar-square; the Strand is perhaps the finest street in Europe, blending the architecture of many periods; and its river-ways are a peculiar feature, and rich with associations. Fleet-street, with its Temple, is not unworthy of being contiguous to the Strand. The fire of London has deprived us of the delight of a real old quarter of the city, but some bits remain, and everywhere there is a stirring multitude, and a great crush and crash of carts and wains. The Inns of Court, and the quarters in the vicinity of the port, Thames-street, Tower-hill, Billingsgate, Wapping, Rotherhithe, are *the best parts of London*; they are full of character: the buildings bear a nearer relation to what the people are doing than in the more polished quarters. The old merchants of the times of the first Georges were a fine race. They knew their position, and built up to it. While the territorial aristocracy, pulling down their family hotels, were raising vulgar streets and squares upon their site, and occupying themselves one of the new tenements, the old merchants filled the straggling lanes, which connected the Royal Exchange with the port of London, with mansions which, if not exactly equal to the palaces of stately Venice, might at least vie with many of the hotels of old Paris. Some of these, though the great majority have been broken up into chambers and counting-houses, still remain intact. —*D'Israeli.*

Cost of Carriage Wate in Cambridge.—The Improvement Commissioners received the following, in terms of advertisements for paving tenders:—Pratt and Sewell, Gray's-inn Lane, London, 9d. per yard, if grouted, 10d.; Joseph Popjoy, 8d. per yard, if grouted, 9½d.; Jeremiah Hurley, Cambridge, 8d. per yard, if grouted, 9d. For the footways:—James Stevens, 13d. per yard, for setting the curbs, 1d. per foot; Thomas Jeffs, 14d. per yard, for setting the curbs, 2d. per foot; William Clee, 14½d. per yard, for setting the curbs, 2d. per foot; James Palmer, 14d. per yard, for setting the curbs, 4d. per foot; R. S. Naylor, 16d. per yard, for setting the curbs, 2d. per foot; Thomas Powell, 16d. per yard, for setting the curbs, 2d. per foot; Joseph Popjoy, 13d. per yard, for setting the curbs, 2d. per foot; Pratt and Sewell, 18d. per yard, for setting the curbs, 2d. per foot.

British Museum.—No less than 19,170 persons passed on Easter Monday through the collections of this institution. As an instance of the increasing interest which the public takes in this national collection, we may state that on Easter Monday, 1845, the number of visitors was 15,316; whereas yesterday there were 19,170.

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